

Proposed H.B. No. 5002

My name is Camille Kritzman. I live in Hartford. I am an organizer for Chispa CT, a group that focuses on environmental justice. H.B5002, Connecticut's "Green New Deal" has exciting implications for our state.

The prospects for job creation and reduction in pollution especially for our 7 counties that received an F in Air quality gradings by the American Lung association are very promising. It's important to ensure that the benefits of the Green New Deal mitigate environmental damage done to those most impacted and directly affected by pollution. This includes ensuring that green new deal jobs go to marginalized communities suffering from the highest rates of environmental damages. My testimony today is focused on children who live in areas with high levels of air pollution in Connecticut, as children are most vulnerable to health issues resulting from poor air quality.

Asthma is the leading cause of absenteeism for elementary students in Connecticut especially for minority students. It is estimated that 1 in 8 students suffer from asthma. Every day, the over 450,000 students who take the bus to school must breathe toxic fumes from diesel school buses, proven to cause asthma, bronchitis, and even long term effects like lung cancer. This is why our state's Green New Deal must include an initiative to electrify our school buses.

Clean buses mean cleaner air and healthier kids and communities. While zero-emissions buses may cost more up front, they cost 30 percent less to maintain than their diesel counterparts, and they reduce greenhouse emissions by almost 80 percent. Every diesel bus replaced with a zero-emission bus is equivalent to taking 27 cars off the road, and can save upwards of \$11,000 per year in fuel and maintenance costs.

As an organizer for Chispa Connecticut, I work with mothers who are hoping to move out of Connecticut because the burden of having a child with asthma is too great. As we continue to strive towards our goal of renewable energy by 2050, it is essential that we join New York, Oregon, Colorado, and California in prioritizing electric school buses so that our children can breathe clean air.

The technology is available, and Connecticut's children are worth it.

As I speak, there is a mother missing work again because her child cannot breathe. Exposure to pollution from diesel fumes at a young age will have life long health consequences for Connecticut children, especially in low income communities. We cannot afford to wait any longer to address this issue. Connecticut residents lives depend on it. I urge the committee to not only vote favorably on HB 5002, but also, to include electrification of our school buses in this initiative. Thank you.